

# WORLD DEAF DAY 2022

## FIAPAS MANIFESTO

### SAFETY AND ACCESSIBLE EMERGENCIES AN URGENT PRIORITY

To mark World Deaf Day, the Spanish Confederation of Families of Deaf People (FIAPAS) would like to present the following Manifesto to society and the public authorities.



The pandemic caused by Covid-19, the Filomena snow storm, the eruption of La Palma volcano, forest fires, earthquakes and floods **have highlighted the difficulties and risks faced by people with deafness in emergency situations** where they have no access to warnings, information about what is happening, or the instructions given to the whole population for their safety and protection.

The lack of knowledge about people with a hearing disability and their reality has meant that, at these times, people with deafness **have not been able to access, at the same time as other citizens, public appearances, press conferences or institutional statements** addressed to the general public by the different public bodies. **Nor have they had access to the instructions and recommendations offered on the ground to the general public in each critical situation**, because they could not access the warnings and announcements made via public address and/or audio warnings.

**Contacting the various helplines set by for emergency situations and the 112 emergency service from a region other than the one in which they live** is, in most cases, impossible for people with deafness as they cannot use the telephone in a conventional way.

**Lack of knowledge** about strategies for communicating with deaf people (whether by verbal language support guidelines or sign language, in the case of deaf signers), about features and functionalities of hearing aids and hearing and verbal communication support products used by deaf people, **makes it difficult to assist, rescue, evacuate and respond to deaf people in a variety of situations of risk and emergencies.**

An advanced society such as ours, engaged, caring and inclusive, cannot allow more than one million two hundred thousand people with a hearing disability and almost three million people with hearing impairment that limits their communication to be excluded and exposed to greater risks to their physical and emotional integrity than other citizens, due to the lack of provision for measures that enable their hearing accessibility and access to information and communication, on an equal basis with others.

In order to guarantee the safety and protection of people with deafness in situations of risk and emergencies, **FIAPAS states that:**

- ✓ **Provision of actions and resources** in emergency situations that take into account the needs of all deaf people, **considering the differences in communication** between them: deaf people with speech who use hearing aids and deaf people using sign language.
- ✓ **Inclusion of subtitling in the media and in all types of audiovisual media** through which information and/or recommendations for action regarding emergency situations are conveyed. **Also sign language interpreting** for deaf people who are users of this language.
- ✓ **Emergency helplines with channels accessible** to deaf people through text (instant messaging, chat...), voice and image (video call with the option of subtitles and with the option of sign language interpreting for deaf people who are users of this language).
- ✓ **Establishment of a single accessible system (with no need for prior registration) to access the 112 emergency number** from anywhere in Spain.
- ✓ **Training for safety and emergency professionals** on the needs of deaf people, including familiarity with guidelines to support verbal communication and other communication strategies, as well as the features and functionalities of hearing aids and support products that enable communication.

## Incidence of deafness in Spain

- In Spain there are **1,230,000 people with a hearing disability** (57% women) over 6 years of age, of different types and grades. To these, we must add the 3,400 aged between 2 and 5 years old who have some degree of hearing impairment. **More than 97% use verbal language to communicate.** According to the INE, 27,300 people use sign language.  
(Survey into Disability, Personal Autonomy and Situations of Dependence 2020. INE)
- **Five in every thousand newborns** reveal some degree of deafness. In Spain this means that **every year** around **2,500 new families have a deaf son or daughter.**  
(Commission for the Early Detection of Infant Hearing Loss - CODEPEH)
- **50% of teenagers and young people aged between 12 and 35 years old** in more developed countries are at risk of hearing loss due to overexposure to noise in recreational contexts.  
(World Health Organization)
- **Presbycusis** affects some **30% of the population between 65 and 70 years old**, rising to **80% in the over 75s.** Because of noise pollution and lifestyles, these hearing-related issues are becoming apparent ever earlier, at around 50 years of age.  
(Spanish Society of Otolaryngology - SEORL)
- **11.3 % of the population have different types and degrees of hearing**, making it difficult for them to follow a normal tone of conversation.  
(EuroTrak study in Spain 2020)



C/ Pantoja, 5, local. 28002 Madrid

91 576 51 49

[www.fiapas.es](http://www.fiapas.es) - @fiapas

Download the FIAPAS Manifesto at [www.bibliotecafiapas.es](http://www.bibliotecafiapas.es)



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25 September 2022

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CONFEDERACIÓN  
ESPAÑOLA  
DE FAMILIAS  
DE PERSONAS SORDAS

EXCELLENCE  
INNOVATION  
SUSTAINABILITY

SPANISH CONFEDERATION OF FAMILIES  
OF DEAF PEOPLE